



Fagaceae. *Quercus*Lepidoptera Myrtaceae. *Pisidium sartorianum* (Berg) Ndzu.*

Message from the President

Hi! It's me again. Hunkered down even more than last time! We've all been zooming, messaging, keeping in touch, but it's just not the same. It took me a while to get stir crazy, but now that I can't be out riding my bike and at least seeing people and moving around in nature around the lakes, etc., I have succumbed. How about you? Most importantly, I hope you are staying safe and wearing a mask.

On the brighter side, we have a light at the end of the tunnel, and I just heard that another vaccine is getting approved... so maybe two lights!

In the meantime, some of you have been learning and perhaps teaching remotely. While it's not the same as working in the same physical space, there are pluses for sure. For example, being able to connect with artists from other states and the global community is really exciting! New doors have been opened with teaching and learning and until we can gather in person again, it has been interesting.

New methods and structures are being made that otherwise would not have been. So there are new opportunities for our future teaching and learning. Yay!

I hope you have a lovely holiday season... as lovely as it can be for now! We are giving (sending) gifts, but not gathering in person until July. Can you imagine how much we'll have to learn HOW to greet each other again? Plus, we will need to remember to put on our more fancy sweats before leaving the house.

May 2021 be less insane! Happy New Year!

Pat Schmidt
President
GRC of the ASBA



*Torner Collection of Sessé and Mociño Biological Illustrations, courtesy of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa.



Featured on first page

Fagaceae.

Quercus Lepidoptera

Myrtaceae.

Pisidium sartorianum (Berg) Ndz.

Life cycle of moth and various species of Quercus leaves.

Torner Collection of Sessé and Mociño Biological Illustrations, courtesy of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Torner Collection of Sessé and Mociño Biological Illustrations is the original collection of botanical and zoological illustrations made during the Spanish exploring expedition of 1787–1803 sent to New Spain under the command of Martin de Sessé y Lacasta (1751–1808) and José Mariano Mociño (1757–1820). The Sessé and Mociño expedition, as it is commonly called, explored extensively in the Caribbean, Mexico and northern Central America, with forays also in Baja and Alta California and as far north as Nootka and Alaska. The drawings were executed by a number of artists including Juan de Dios Vicente de la Cerda (fl.1787–1803), Atanasio Echeverría y Godoy (fl.1787–1803), Jose Guio (fl.1787–1803) and Pedro Oliver (fl.1787–1803). The collection comprises approximately 2,000 watercolor drawings and sketches. In 1981 it was purchased for the Institute's permanent collection by the Hunt Foundation.

Inspired by Nature 2021 Exhibit

2021 is right around the corner and planning for our next exhibit is underway! This exhibit will be held at the **Artistry** in Bloomington. The art center has continued to have in person shows, so at this time we are assuming the coming show will also be in person.

This show is earlier than in the past, so we wanted to give everyone time enough to plan and get the dates on their calendars. So please keep working on your art and plan to submit this year. It will be great to have work up on walls again!

Exhibit co-chairs,
Ronda Dick and Barb Bjornson

Inspired by Nature 2021 Timeline

July 1 to August 6, 2021

Exhibition dates

Saturday, June 6, 2021

Deliver artwork and forms to
the Artistry

Thursday, July 1, 2021

Possible Opening Reception
(no food) 6:00 to 8:00pm

Saturday August 7, 2021

Pickup artwork from Artistry



Flower Power

A rare album of 18th-century drawings by Lady Maria Compton and others highlights the role played by women in the early days of plant science.

This article was produced by Christie's on the occasion of the recent sale of the album. Images (artwork by Lady Maria Compton) and story courtesy of Christie's.

By Jessica Lack

The 18th century was a golden age for botanical art.

Intrepid naturalists traveled to the far corners of the earth in search of parrot's beak, ghost orchids and jade vine, certain that the analysis of such rare species would propel humanity from ignorance to enlightenment.

These scientists were often accompanied by virtuoso illustrators, who published their discoveries for the edification of the public. 'Dare to know' wrote the German philosopher Immanuel Kant in 1784, contending that the study of nature could provide mankind with the foundations for a better world.

While the names of male botanical artists such as Georg Ehret (1708-1770) and Pierre-Joseph Redoute (1759-1840) have lived on, the same cannot always be said of the women.

The Swiss entomologist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), who battled malaria in the Dutch colony of Suriname to record its flora and fauna, has only recently been recognized for her contribution to science. Likewise, Madeleine Basseporte (1701-1780), who served as the official painter of the King's gardens in Paris, and had many of her paintings incorrectly attributed to Redouté.



Annabel Kishor, a specialist in British Drawings and Watercolours at Christie's, explains that it was rare for 18th-century female illustrators to sign their paintings. 'Quite often they only discreetly initialed their works,' she says.

All of which explains why the discovery of an album of 69 botanical illustrations by Lady Maria Compton, Marchioness of Northampton (1766-1843), her teacher Margaret Meen (circa 1755-1824) and her niece Emma Smith (1801-1876)—who later married Jane Austen's nephew—is such a rare find.

'We know very little about these women, so this is a valuable record of three remarkably talented painters,' says Kishor.

The album, which was offered in the *300 Years of British Drawings* sale in December, has been in the Compton family for more than 200 years. 'Maria's son, Spencer Compton, became the president of the Royal Society, so I like to think she inspired a love of science and art in her children,' says Kishor.

Lady Compton's tutor, Margaret Meen, was one of the first artists to be employed by the Royal

continued

Botanic Gardens, established at Kew in West London in 1749 by Princess Augusta, the mother of George III.

‘It’s hugely significant that Kew Gardens was founded by a woman,’ says Kishor. ‘It meant it was a respectable place for women who were interested in art and science.’

Meen devoted her life to the study of plants, providing highly skilled scientific illustrations for publication. She also taught Queen Charlotte (the wife of George III) and her daughter Princess Elizabeth.

According to Kishor, the Queen was fascinated by botany, and spent many a happy hour illustrating the rare species brought back by the naturalist Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) from his voyage around the South Seas with Captain Cook.

Together with Banks, who became the unofficial director of Kew, she encouraged naturalists to criss-cross the world in search of exotic finds, persuading sea captains to take great risks. Seeds and pressed flowers were sent back to Kew for research.

‘These drawings weren’t intended for publication—that would have been considered vulgar. So Maria and Emma could be more experimental.’

Thanks to this royal patronage, botanical illustration became a fashionable pastime for noble ladies. ‘Aristocratic women who normally wouldn’t be encouraged to discuss art and science were suddenly creating complex drawings based on the Linnaean system,’ explains Kishor.

The Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) established the binomial system of naming plant



and animal species in 1735, and it is still used today. Working at Kew, Meen would have been very aware of such advances in science and incorporated them into her teachings.

A traditional 18th-century botanical illustration would have featured a single plant with a straight stem and the reproductive organs depicted to one side. However, Lady Compton’s flower paintings appear more animated.

Kishor suspects Meen’s students had more freedom than their male contemporaries. ‘These drawings were never intended for publication—that would have been considered vulgar. So Maria and Emma could be more experimental.’

The results are elegiac portraits of the natural world that anticipate the paintings of the Victorian botanist Marianne North (1830-1890), who travelled to the farthest corners of the globe to document flowers in their natural habitats. Her paintings are now housed in a special gallery at Kew.

‘You cannot know a plant just by its structure. You need to understand its nature and habits, see it move and experience its fragility,’ says Kishor. ‘Lady Compton’s paintings do just that. She understood that every flower is a unique individual.’

Abundant Future: Cultivating Diversity in Garden, Farm, and Field

Here are two more members' artworks accepted into the ASBA Triennial exhibit. (We showed Jane Hancock's *Wild Plum* and Linda Powers' *Gooseberries* in the fall issue). It's so impressive that our chapter is consistently represented in these national/international shows!



Linda Medved Lufkin
Zea mays
Glass Gem Corn
watercolor on velum



Connie Scanlon
Vaccinium corymbosum 'Stanley'
Heirloom Blueberry Branch #1
watercolor on velum

A Poem from Nancy Gehrig



*Thank you Nancy Gehrig
for a year of poems!*

Nancy Gehrig
*maples drawn in a
friend's sketchbook*

The Significance of Location

by Pattiann Rogers

The cat has the chance to make the sunlight
Beautiful, to stop it and turn it immediately
Into black fur and motion, to take it
As shifting branch and brown feather
Into the back of the brain forever.

The cardinal has flown the sun in red
Through the oak forest to the lawn.
The finch has caught it in yellow
And taken it among the thorns. By the spider
It has been bound tightly and tied
In an eight-stringed knot.

The sun has been intercepted in its one
Basic state and changed to a million varieties
Of green stick and tassel. It has been broken
Into pieces by glass rings, by mist
Over the river. Its heat
Has been given the board fence for body,
The desert rock for fact. On winter hills
It has been laid down in white like a martyr.

This afternoon we could spread gold scarves
Clear across the field and say in truth,
“Sun you are silk.”

Imagine the sun totally isolated,
Its brightness shot in continuous streaks straight out
Into the black, never arrested,
Never once being made light.

Someone should take note
Of how the earth has saved the sun from oblivion.

Member News

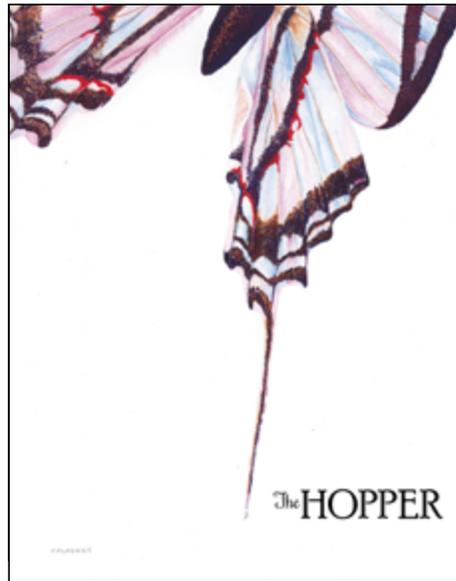
Back to School

Nancy Lizette Berlin

Covid was making life just a little to quiet for me, so I decided to shake it up. It was more than forty years ago when I received my University of Minnesota (UN) degree, so was I surprised that I still remembered my student ID when I registered for two classes this fall! All I needed to register was a scanned copy of my Minnesota Drivers License and to be proud to be at least 62 years old.

I enrolled in two graduate level classes: Botanical Medicines and Ayurveda for just \$10/credit—and they would have been free if I audited! Both were online, as was most of the full course catalog during covid. I am studying for finals as I write this, but let it be known: I loved both classes. I plan to take an Ethnobotany this spring.

What does this have to do with Botanical Art? Well you can enrich your botanical art with other art classes, botany or health-related classes. Or you can just enrich your life with any number of classes in person or online. You can find out more about the Senior Citizen Education Program at: <https://onestop.umn.edu/academics/senior-citizen-education-program>



Brandi Malarky

I have my art featured on the front and back covers (as well as a piece inside) of the December issue of *The Hopper* literary magazine. *The Hopper* is a Vermont publisher with a social mission—to spread a message of hope and renewal through words and images and to help foster a sustainable environment in the process. <http://www.hoppermag.org/>



Pat Anderson

This is a sketch I did on a fall wintry day in Eden Prairie. A branch from my crab apple tree, (*Malus domestica*). Then I did a watercolor of the branch. I happened to look out of my sunroom window one day and saw this poor tree whose branch I had painted from out in 8 inches of snow, so continued the "Picture." The autumn leaves were still on the trees; some falling.

Member News

GRC Members in Minneapolis Institute of Art “Foot in the Door 5 Show”

Four GRC members took part in the “Foot in the Door 5 Show” at Mia. This exhibition is held every ten years and celebrates Minnesota Artists. The only criteria is that each artwork is no larger than one cubic foot.

The first “Foot in the Door Show” in 1980 was the brainchild of the Artist Panel of the Minneapolis Artist Exhibition Program (MAEP), a curatorial program of Mia dedicated to exhibiting and supporting artists living and working in Minnesota.

This year’s show is virtual. The show runs November 1, 2020 to January 10, 2021.
<https://new.artsmia.org/exhibition/foot-in-the-door-5>



Barb Bjornson
Green Heron



Linda Powers
Greater Yellow Lady's-Slipper



Kathe Wilcoxon
Spring



Diane Pearson
Twists and Turns

For Your Calendar

GRC Spring Newsletter Submissions Due

March 15, 2021

13th Annual Inspired by Nature Show

July 1 to August 6, 2021

Artistry, Bloomington

June 6 - deliver artwork to Artistry

July 1 - possible opening reception

August 7 - pick up artwork

GRC Annual Lunch and Meeting

November 2021

ASBA Conference in Minneapolis

October 2025

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A Note from the Newsletter Chair

Thank you for your updates! Winter is here and thanks to the gods for the wonderful fall we just enjoyed! A quiet winter engulfs us, so let's make it memorable with reading, drawing and maybe just doing whatever we please because before there was no time and now there is.

Kathe Wilcoxon

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Great River Chapter Mission Statement

Our mission is to create public awareness and appreciation for historical and contemporary botanical art in our community. To educate the public in plant diversity, regional ecology and preservation. To introduce the public to the beauty and usefulness of botanical art through exhibitions and provide a forum for artists to meet, share ideas and learn from one another.